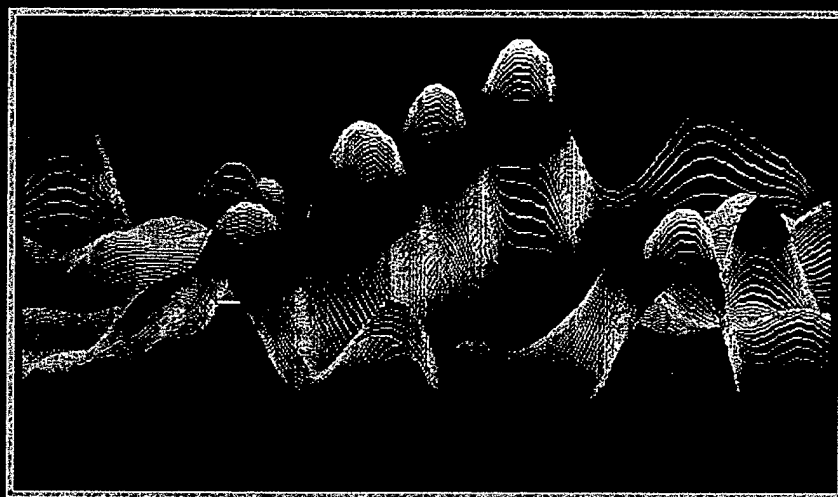


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Larousse plc

43-45 Annandale Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4AZ

Larousse Kingfisher Chambers Inc.

95 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016

This edition first published by Larousse 1995

Preceding edition published in the UK under the title *Chambers Science and*

Technology Dictionary by W & R Chambers Ltd 1988, and by agreement in

North America under the title *Cambridge Dictionary of Science and Technology*

First edition published (as *Chamber's Technical Dictionary*) in the UK

by W & R Chambers Ltd 1940, revised 1958 (as *Chambers Dictionary of*

Science and Technology), 1971, 1974, and 1984 (as *Chambers Science*

and Technology Dictionary)

10987654321

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Illustrations drawn by Peter Walker

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 94-73123

ISBN 0-7523-0010-5 (hardback)

ISBN 0-7523-0011-3 (paperback)

The publisher would like to thank Jack Weigel, Coordinator
of the Science Library at the University of Michigan/Ann Arbor,
for his invaluable assistance in reviewing the material for this volume.

Printed in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

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microgamete (*Biol*) The smaller of a pair of conjugating gametes, generally considered to be the male gamete.

microgametocyte (*Zool*) In Protozoa, a stage developing from a trophozoite and giving rise to male gametes.

microgap switch (*ElecEng*) A switch, used on low-power, low-voltage circuits, which relies for arc extinction on the lateral spread of the arc stream by mutual repulsion between contacts separated by thousandths of an inch.

microglia (*Zool*) A small type of neuroglia cell (occurring more frequently in grey matter than in white matter) having an irregular body and freely branching processes; can be phagocytic.

microglobulin (*Immun*) Any small globulin. Used in respect of Bence Jones protein in urine or of β_2 -microglobulin.

microgram (*Genrl*) Unit of mass equal to one-millionth of a gram (10^{-9} kg). Symbol μ g. Also *microgramme*.

microgranite (*Geol*) A medium-grained, microcrystalline, acid igneous rock having the same mineral composition and texture as a granite.

micrographic texture (*Geol*) A distinctive rock texture in which the simultaneous crystallization of quartz and feldspar has led to the former occurring as apparently isolated fragments, resembling runic hieroglyphs, set in a continuous matrix of feldspar.

microgravity (*Space*) The condition of near-weightlessness induced by free fall or unpowered space flight; it is characterized by the virtual absence of gravity-induced convection, hydrostatic pressure and sedimentation. The term also refers to the scientific discipline which is concerned with the evaluation of processes in a near-zero g environment, particularly fluid physics, life sciences and materials science.

microgyria (*Med*) Abnormal smallness of the convolutions of the brain.

micro-incineration (*Biol*) A technique for examining the distribution of minerals in slide preparations of tissue-sections or cells. The organic material is vaporized by heat and the nature and position of the mineral ash determined by microscopic examination.

micro-instruction (*Comp*) Simple executable instructions wired or built into a computer. Cf *microcode*.

microkernel (*Comp*) The minimum possible collection of processor-specific operating-system functions. Other services like input/output, windows and communications are designed to have multiple personalities which will allow them to run a variety of different software eg Windows, Unix, OS/2 and Mac. A feature of many operating systems under development.

microlecithal (*Zool*) Said of eggs containing very little yolk. Cf *megalecithal*.

microlens (*ImageTech*) A CCD array with a microscopic lens over each pixel to increase its light-gathering capacity. For specialized applications the microlenses can be employed in place of a conventional lens.

microlight (*Aero*) Aircraft whose empty weight does not exceed 330 lb (150 kg). In US *ultralight* is used for weights up to 254 lb (115 kg).

microlite (*Geol*) A general term for minute crystals of tabular or prismatic habit, found in microcrystalline rocks. These give a reaction with polarized light.

microlux (*Phys*) A unit for very weak illumination; equal to one-millionth of a lux.

micromanipulator (*Biol*) An instrument used to handle cells seen in a microscope; eg to remove a nucleus or inject RNA. The fine movements are controlled indirectly by pneumatic, mechanical or other means.

micromazia (*Med*) Failure of the female breast to develop after puberty.

micromere (*Zool*) In a segmenting ovum, one of the small cells which are formed in the upper or animal hemisphere.

micromesh sieves (*PowderTech*) See *electro-formed sieves*.

micrometeorite (*Astron, Space*) An extremely small particle found in space, typically of mass less than 10^{-6} g, and diameter less than 10^{-4} m. It does not burn up in the Earth's atmosphere, but drifts down to the surface. Comets are probably abundant sources of new micrometeorites.

micrometer (*Astron*) An instrument which measures small angular separations in the telescope. It consists of three frameworks carrying spider-webs close to the image plane; one is fixed and the others are each adjustable by micrometer heads, by which the separation is read, with a graduated circle giving the angular relation of a double star. See *micrometer gauge*.

micrometer eyepiece (*Biol*) See *eyepiece graticule*.

micrometer gauge (*Eng*) A U-shaped length gauge in which the gap between the measuring faces is adjustable by an accurate screw whose end forms one face. The gap is read off a scale uncovered by a thimble carried by the screw, and by a circular scale which is engraved on the thimble. Commonly *micrometer*.

micrometer theodolite (*Surv*) A theodolite equipped with micrometers instead of the usual verniers for reading the horizontal and vertical circles.

micrometre (*Phys*) One-millionth of a metre. Symbol μ m. Formerly *micron*.

micromicro- (*Genrl*) Prefix for one million millionth, or 10^{-12} ; replaced in SI by *pico-* (p).

micromodule (*ElecEng*) Sometimes said of circuits or components formed from the same crystal of material, eg germanium. An *integrated circuit*.

micron (*Genrl*) Obsolete but still popular measure of length equal to 10^{-6} m, symbol μ . Replaced in SI by *micrometre*, symbol μ m.

micronized coal (*Eng*) Pulverized coal in which >80% will pass through a 40 μ m sieve.

micronucleus (*Zool*) In Ciliophora, the smaller of the two nuclei which is involved with sexual reproduction. Cf *macronucleus*.

micronutrient (*Ecol*) A *trace element* required in relatively small quantities by living organisms; for plants the micronutrients include Fe, B, Mn, Zn, Cu, Mo, Cl. Cf *macronutrient*. See *essential element*.

micropalaentology (*Geol*) The study of microfossils.

micropertite (*Min*) A feldspar which consists of intergrowths of potassium feldspar and albite in a microscopic scale.

microphage (*Zool*) A small phagocytic cell in blood or lymph, chiefly the polymorphonuclear leucocytes (neutrophils). Adj *microphagocytic*.

microphagous (*Zool*) Feeding on small particles of food. Cf *macrophagous*.

microphanerophyte (*Bot*) A phanerophyte, 2-8 m high.

microphone (*Acous*) An acousto-electric transducer, essential in all sound-reproducing systems. The fluctuating pressure in the sound wave is applied to a mechanical system, such as a ribbon or diaphragm. The motion of which generates an electromotive force, or modulates a current or voltage. See *carbon*, *directional*, *electromagnetic*, *hot-wire*, *lapel*, *moving-coil*, *Olson*, *omnidirectional*, *pressure*, *pressure-gradient*.

microphone response (*Acous*) Response measured over the operating frequency range in a particular direction, or averaged over all directions. The characteristic response is usually given by the ratio of the open circuit voltage generated by the microphone to the sound pressure ($N m^{-2}$) existing in the free progressive wave before introducing the microphone.

microphonic (*Electronics*) Said of a component which responds to acoustic vibrations and/or knocks.

microphonicity (*Acous*) See *microphonic noise*.

microphonic noise (*Acous*) Noise in the output of a valve related to mechanical vibration of the electrode system. Also *microphonicity*.

microphotography (*ImageTech*) Photography of normal sized objects, esp documents, plans and graphic



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